

FROM SIENA TO ROME

Antipope come here, they will not be heard." * Stefano was still kept at Siena by his family affairs, which, in spite of Catherine's exhortations to cut and not wait to untie the knots that bound him to the world, he was unable to get off his hands. He kept up a constant correspondence with Neri di Landoccio, expressing the extreme delight with which he had heard of Urban's proceedings, and assuring him of the loyalty of the Sienese. " And, in proof of this, I tell thee further that when, a few days ago, it was first rumoured that an ambassador of that antidemon of Fondi was coming hither, who had already been to Pisa, and it was feared that he might be given audience here, many who desired the honour of God (among whom I will not exclude myself, however lukewarmly I may desire it) appealed to the Palace, and also to others outside who could prevent it; representing to them that this demon came to sow heresy and to contaminate our faith, adding that it would be greatly to the honour of God if he were burned. And Pietro and I in particular went at once to my lord of Narni, in order that he might go to the Signoria, offering ourselves as his servants to be the first to lay hands upon him ; and I promise thee that we found the people so well disposed that thou wouldst have been greatly delighted ; and especially those of the Palace, who at once gave orders that he should not be allowed to enter the gate. Besides this, they would have consented to his being stoned by the children ; and I am certain that, if he had come, he would have lost his life, in one way or in another. I write thee this that thou mayest have some little pleasure at the good disposition that there now is in this unhappy city of ours, instead of the sorrow that in other times thou hast had, at seeing her hold against the obedience she owes to Holy Church. Do not forget me, s,weet brother mine, but pray earnestly to God for me, for certainly I have very great need of it; praying Him especially that He grant me grace to know how to free myself from this corruption of the world, so that I may ever do His will in the way that is most pleasing to Him."²

¹ January 14, 1379. *Letters del discepoli*, II. ^a January 15, 1379. *Ibi* 4., 12.